UN Report on scam in Oil for Food Programme

180. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of news items published in a newspaper dated 30.10.2005 captioned "Saddam Scam: Natwar smells conspiracy in UN Report";

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that a political party of the country has also been involved in the report ; and

(c) if so, Government's reaction in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) to (c) The Government has seen news reports commenting on the fifth and final report of the Independent Inquiry Committee (IIC) headed by Mr. Paul Volcker, appointed by the UN Secretary General to inquire into the Oil-for-Food Programme (OFFP) in Iraq, which was released on October 27, 2005. The report consists of 623 pages and another 1083 pages of tables. A political party of the country is listed among non-contractual beneficiaries in the tables of the report.

The Government is determined to establish the facts in this matter and has set up an inquiry headed by Mr. Justice R.S. Pathak, former Chief Justice of India and former Judge of the International Court of Justice. The Goverment has also appointed Shri Virendra Dayal, former Under Secretary General of the United Nations as its Special Envoy to liaise with the United Nations Organisations and its Member States to gather relevant materials in connection with the report of the Independent Inquiry Committee into the Oil-for-Food Programme. The Special Envoy has the Full Power and Authority of the Government of India to execute the responsibilities entrusted to him.

Abductions of Hindus in Pakistan

181. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether many Hindu men and women are being kidnapped and their abductions have increased in Sindh (Pakistan);

(b) whether Government have taken up the matter with Pakistani counterpart;